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STATEMENT BY SENATORS DASCHLE, CONRAD, AND LEVIN ON THE NEW CBO REPORT SHOWING THAT NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE COULD COST OVER \$150 BILLION

Following is a statement from Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, and Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin regarding the CBO's new cost estimate for elements of a layered system of national missile defense:

"In his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, President Bush pledged that America will do whatever is necessary to ensure our national security. We share the President's commitment, and will continue to work with him to secure America's safety. One of the elements the President raised in his discussion of our national security is his desire to develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies.

"Last February, we asked the CBO to assess the cost of a number of national missile defense elements. The report released today shows that developing, deploying, and maintaining a modest layered system that includes ground, sea and space-based elements could easily cost well over \$150 billion.

"Although the Department of Defense has neither recommended a specific architecture, nor determined that a system would be operationally effective, nonetheless President Bush has indicated a commitment to pursue a layered national missile defense system that contains each of these elements. The CBO has provided its best cost estimate for elements of such a system, based on the information available from the Department of Defense and other sources.

"Up until this point, the debate over national missile defense has been about the threats we face, what is technologically possible, and whether the Administration's approach to missile defense is consistent with our broader arms control and security interests. Today, the CBO has provided insight into another key factor - what is affordable, both in terms of the outright cost of such a system, and the trade-offs that would be required to deploy even a modest layered defense system.

"If the Administration decides to pursue such a costly program, it could draw resources away from programs to counter other, more likely and more immediate threats we know we face: terrorism, attacks with anthrax or other biological and chemical agents, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and delivery systems that are far more likely to be used than are ballistic missiles, such as trucks, ships, airplanes, and suitcases.

"Given the threats we face and this new information provided by CBO, we are asking the Administration to provide detailed information on its missile defense plans and costs so Congress can evaluate the resource tradeoffs with other pressing national needs and so we can work together to do whatever is necessary to ensure our national security."

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